

Patton

Transcribed by
Liz Thompson (ARC)

Ellsberg, D. (3/1/83)
Boston Univ., Dept. History

- 1 -

I'm Emily _____ from the Department of English.

I'm Art Hirsch (sp.) Social Science and (inaudible)

Ted Cohen (sp) teaching/fellow in Sociology.

(inaudible) Tufts University, _____ psychology.

_____, in the Political Science Department.

I'm _____ Simoni (sp) I teach a course in nuclear weapons in the Physics Department.

I'm Jim Ellstein (sp) I'm in the Social Science Department at the college basic studies.

I'm Pat Robertson and I'm a teaching fellow in the Creative Writing Department.

MB-G I'm Margaret Brenman-Gibson and I'm in the Department of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School at Cambridge Hospital.

Ellsberg And I'm Dan Ellsberg, no institutional affiliation. (laughter) Unemployable. (laughter)
In fact, the last faculty seminar that I was invited to participate in after a long decade of being extremely in demand as a participant...lecturer at faculty seminars around the country because of my RAND Corporation, Department of Defense affiliation, the State Department affiliation....the last faculty seminar I was invited to participate in was June, 1971 just before the Pentagon Papers came out until this week, so I'm enjoying this chance and it does give me the chance to...I mean, the possibility of a kind of interaction that I don't usually get in in a lecture situation. Especially...there's another aspect...I do lecture for a living and I lecture as my main form of political activity. I lecture a great deal. When I say I haven't been in a faculty group...I've been on 500 campuses or more, I suppose, in the last ten years, but I've never been invited by faculty to discuss with them about anything... for reasons ~~that are~~ another matter, I suppose. The effect then of lecturing, one night, on a given campus all the time, is that I always feel obliged to say what I think is the most important thing facing us at that moment. In fact, I do ^{hear} ~~here~~ myself ~~saying~~, covering the same ground a great deal, and I would love the chance to pick out some things to talk about that I don't hear myself saying all the time. And one aspect of that is that some of them I think tend to be controversial, even

if ^{one person or another} without any...because they're unfamiliar or their out of a set way of thinking. And I expect some of the things I'd like to say today, I don't think any one of them will offend everyone simultaneously, but I think a number of things I might try to bring myself to say, with some effort, (because I've inhibited myself on some of these things for a long while) will in fact awaken a reaction in one or another of you--that can't be right," or "that's wrong, for the following reasons" or something--and actually, rather than postpone all that to the question period, it occurs to me I'd like to try something I haven't done--haven't had a chance to do--and that is to ask you to voice your objections as we go along, if you wouldn't mind, in the first half-hour or so, if I register ^{them} or maybe move on in the afternoon, or a little bit later or something like that, rather than give immediate question/answer response. But I would like you to voice what's bothering you about what you hear ^{about} ~~of~~ something I'm saying so that I can have this in mind. Because I think in a lot of cases your objection will not be unfamiliar to me, and I'll have some kind of response to it, whether it's satisfactory to you or not. ^That might...will help us move along, because I know that when people have a kind of reaction on their mind and they don't say it, it's hard to listen from then on because (~~immediate~~)...it's overlooked, you know, this simple fact or something like that; it's hard to take the rest of it seriously.

Well, let me give you an example of what... I'd like to try to talk or think aloud here about the current risks of the Arms Race as resulting from the interaction of two super powers, both of whom (as I see it) are now contributing in significant ways to the growing risks of nuclear war in the world. You'll recognize that for most audiences that statement will appear to be half wrong on its face and inevitably so. I don't read many articles (and I try to keep up on the literature of this very closely) I don't read many ⁱⁿ articles that seem able to keep in focus, the same frame of the article, the

Ellsberg, D. (3/1/83)
Boston University, Dept. History

- 3 -

possibility that both sides are...both sides in fact are increasing human dangers very significantly. ^{and} my point here is not simply to try to be balanced or to ...or to emphasize ^{the} that the situation is totally symmetric; my point is that it's not totally symmetric, although there are similarities ^{on both sides} ~~in this~~, nor is it to allocate blame in some very equal ^{way} ~~blame~~. In fact, my point isn't to ultimately blame so much as to understand, but also to try to see how we can change this situation. So, I do think this is a familiar point of view to all of you here, ^{ing} I'm sure, but I do think we obviously want to achieve and understand, ^{ing} ~~in~~ which will help us change the situation, whether or not you happen to believe the risks are getting greater, as I do, most people assume that the risks are significant and need to be reduced. So, we want to try to understand this in a way that will suggest a way to change it, and I think that to exempt one side... to regard one side or the other as somehow exempt from blame is to...for example, as Reagan encourages us to do and some Leftists encourage us to do, is to miss mechanisms and interactions at work that are essential to understand if we're going to try to change the situation.

So, let me start with a comment on blame or wrong-doing or criminology-- not because that's my subject, but to get something...a kind of judgment right out in the open that does establish the point that I want, that I'm seeking a critical understanding of this. In other words, a sense that not everything is either perfect or optable or unchangeable. ⁴⁾ Consider the crimes of the Soviet Union, Stalin's crimes for example--if they're to be considered crimes, which I'm willing to do--let's consider the human suffering that Stalin caused for whatever ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{intention} without judging it. Let's look at the effects of some of his policies. ^{yes.} And that involves let's say the human loss of life in ^{the} ~~collective~~ ^{the} ~~collective~~. Earlier than that, one can look at the scale of loss of life in the Civil War, however one judges that in ~~an~~ ^a judgmental way. Then you have the vast loss of life in the

Ellsberg, D. (3/1/83)
Boston University, Dept. History

- 4 -

~~Pershings~~ ^{of the 40's} purges and you add those together, as Richard Pikes ~~is~~ is always doing in his arithmetic and so forth, you get very sizeable figures for the killing of non-combatants, for the killing of civilians, ^{a subject} I want to talk about in a little bit. We can call it massacre. Sanctioned, officially organized, somewhat random and indiscriminate, but nonetheless official policies leading to and foreseeably leading to the deaths of very large numbers of unarmed people — citizens of his own country. So something that suggests itself to be judged in the context of criminality, ^{whether} ~~or~~ war crime or otherwise. Consider all of those together in the light of something that the Soviet Union is preparing to do right now, and has been for thirty years, but especially in the last fifteen years. They are preparing a machinery which, if ever loosed, launched, functioned, whether ⁱⁿ a nuclear war first or second, whether first or second, will kill about half a billion civilians. It may be a hundred-million less than that, or it may be half-a-billion more than that, but when I say the risks of nuclear war, I think, are very significant and growing, and in part by the Soviet actions, I'm saying the Soviets right now are acting in various ways which increase the probability, 'increase the possibility, that in the not/ ^{very} distant future, maybe in the next ten years or twenty years, a nuclear war may take place in which the Soviet machinery, if it functions as they have designed it to function, will slaughter three hundred or four hundred or six hundred or eight hundred million people, which is to say that as a project, [of course, no one accuses (I, certainly don't) the Soviets of wanting this to happen or in any way desiring a nuclear war large or small. I'm ^{going to leap ahead} ~~(incredible)~~ ahead and say I don't believe Reagan wants a nuclear war, large or small, or anyone in the U.S. government.] So, that's not the issue. It's a conditional matter. It's a machinery that's to be used only under certain circumstances, though it might happen somewhat by accident, but it's meant to be turned on deliberately under certain circumstances, ^A and if A., B., or C., occurs, the project says, we, the Russians, will kill half a billion

Ellsberg, D. (3/1/83)
Boston University, Dept. History

- 5 -

people. And I want to pose this question, which is a new one in my mind, but it was suggested by Herman Meula(?) actually, ^{at} ~~on~~ Nuremberg, the Nuremberg Tribunal~~s~~ just last week. Something else was said, which I'll refer to, which is just this: Which crime of Stalin compares unfavorably, let's say, with the current project under Brezhnev and Andropov, of a readiness to kill half a billion people; a contingency which may, in fact, occur and whose likelihood is being increased by Soviet policies, among others. Now, we hear a lot of criticism of the Soviet Union from our leaders, but I haven't heard that one in just those terms and, curiously, and...because this is a preparation for a crime that would now yet be unprecedented and historic, just as in a significant sense the Collectivization ~~(?)~~ and the ^{purges} ~~Persings~~ were, in their day, unprecedented and historic. But this one seems to dwarf those, actually. The obvious reason why we don't see a focus on this particular crime of Russia is, of course, that it is a mirror image of what we are preparing to do, and there is an unspoken Nuremberg principle which is the principle of selective prosecution ^{from} ~~in~~ the Nuremberg trials, which is that if you ^{are} ~~was~~ doing the prosecuting, you do not select for your indictment something of which your side ^{equally} ~~isn't fully~~ or more guilty, which has an aspect of fairness in it, but it removes from the discussion in moral terms and empirical terms, what may be a fairly important phenomenon to look at. ¹ And the mere fact that we happen to be equally guilty, doesn't mean that it's not in fact...does not in fact challenge us to a moral analysis of it or an empirical analysis of it.

Now, let me guess that another thing that keeps other people from looking at Russia in just those terms, is that it seems so self-evident that, bad as that may be and similar to our own actions as that may be, that it's self-evidently reflexive, imitative of us, ^a ~~as~~ response to us, an essentially passive and reasonable reaction to what we ourselves have done, more or less compelled on. So, certainly when it comes to either predicting what they'll do

- 6 -

or morally judging it, that's not the place to start; the place is here. That can be, I think, somewhat...may involve missing some current realities. Reagan's picture, which is held by nearly all Americans, is that in the nuclear arms competition on the two sides, the U.S. has acted as I've just described in response to a clearly perceived and reasonably assessed threat and challenge from the Soviet Union, beating them out in effect from technical dominance by a hair's-breath time after time, just barely managing to hold our own, in facing the threat that they pose. This is so divorced from reality as to have just almost no shred of evidence ^{it} ~~(inaudible)~~ is almost, if anything, a reversal of the truth. On the other hand, as I said, the other picture is (the one that I just gave you) that the Russians, on the contrary, are always catching up, defending themselves against threats that we were posing, and so forth; that one in fact is a good model for about seventeen-eighteen years ^{through} ~~up to~~ the Khrushchev period. Khrushchev, in fact, did not race the United States, nor did Stalin on nuclear weapons. There was no real nuclear arms race in the deployment of nuclear weapons. There could be said to be a race in which we were several years ahead technically, then as now, in the development and testing of nuclear weapons and vehicles, and the Russians did spend every effort to imitate a technical development, to reproduce it as quickly as they could, which tended to be three, four, or five years after us. They did not proceed to spend the money to produce or deploy significant numbers of those weapons with the exception of intermediate-range missiles and medium-range missiles aimed at Europe. As late as 1961, and some of you may have heard me say this before, but frankly if you haven't heard it from me, my guess would be you haven't heard it--and that is, that as late as 1961, the Soviets, at a time when the U.S. had three-thousand bombers in range of Russia and two-hundred war heads in range of Russia, the Soviets had 192 bombers in range of the United States and four ICBM's in range of the United States.

- 7 -

Therefore, when people say deterrents^{ence} in the modern sense, let's say, in the current sense, has worked for thirty-five years; why tamper with it, ^{?"} there's a lot of misunderstandings that lie back ^{of} about it, ^{but} that one almost surely is the empirical disbelief that there was something like a balance during that period, and that what worked, if anything was necessary to work, if the Russians had to be deterred or whatever sense it's thought to have worked, what was working was not a balance of nuclear weapons; what was working was a U.S. monopoly of nuclear weapons which the Soviets allowed us to have, chose to allow us to have. Now when Krushchev was replaced by Brezhnev^{zh}, in part because of Soviet back-downs in the face of that superiority, [in the Taiwan Straits in '58, to some degree in Laos in '61, in Berlin in '61, ^{and} in Cuba in '62,] Brezhnev came in--(for other reasons as well, related to agricultural policy and so forth)--significantly because ~~of~~ the failures of U.S. - Soviet foreign policy were attributed to this vast monopoly, to the failure to race the United States. So another phase began in which Brezhnev had said, "that will not have to happen again" (he said this to his military evidently); "you will have what it takes so that we will never again have to back down because of an immense U.S. superiority; we will achieve ^{parity} ~~parity~~ at whatever costs it takes." So that an immense build-up does begin at that point. Indeed, more money starts getting spent by the Russians then than the U.S. has been spending since then.

MBG ? : Literally in '63?

Ellsberg: Yeah, when Krushchev comes in, but it's more recently...more recently it's even more, but in the late sixties ^{more} ~~or~~. That in fact is true. They have been out-spending us in that period but what Americans don't realize is they were starting from close to zero on the strategic side; it's not a sense that we were about even in '62, '63, and then they plunged ahead--that's not the way it was. We were up here and then they began spending the money that we had spent five to ten years earlier. For example, in particular, pouring concrete around their missiles in holes in the ground, which is the most expensive part of the operation,

- 8 -

and making those missiles relatively invulnerable to our ^{attack} ~~time~~. So a second phase, then, starts which reaches something like ^{parity,} ~~parity~~, for practical purposes, in about '68, '69. And they've continued to, as I say, spend more money for other reasons I won't go into. We did not stop racing qualitatively. The notion that we ~~either~~ ^{ever} relaxed in that process, which is put to us by people ^{who} criticized, whether Carter or Nixon or so on, that's a flat lie. We pushed ahead technically, we remained ahead three to five years during that period, and we are today technically in terms of accuracy and other (inaudible--cough) technological matters, we've always stayed ahead of them. But the ^{parity,} ~~parity~~ then, essentially set in, quite a while ago, over a dozen years ago. Still, in that period the Soviets could be said to be, as I say, catching up, giving themselves a retaliatory force which they did not have earlier, and the lack of which had led to back-downs in the face of U.S. first-use ^{I'm going to} ~~threats~~ ^{(as we use that term to mean threats of initiating local nuclear war with small, tactical nuclear weapons, but backed-up by a willingness to strike, to escalate, and to strike first, disarming the Soviet Union).} Okay, they backed-down then in a number of cases in the face of this immense U.S. first-strike threat which was pretty credible, given this immense U.S. superiority.

?: Which cases are you talking about where the Soviets backed-down?

Ellsberg: One that's least known to the public, but an extremely important one and a very well-documented now, is the 1958 Taiwan Straits crisis, in a time then of rather close U.S. ~~Soviet~~ ^(S) Soviet/Chinese collaboration, and in the face of our threat and readiness to initiate nuclear war if the Chinese should continue...should either invade the off-shore islands, (which are a few miles off mainland China, recognized by both sides to be part of mainland China in political terms, so the Chinese nationalists said, you know, agreed that they were part of mainland China, but the Chinese nationalists had put a third of their army on those islands in which

- 9 -

they were conducting propaganda and some raids.) If the Chinese had invaded, which seemed likely, or if even they had continued their artillery bombardment of the islands which precluded ^{re-supply} ~~re-supply~~ (because the islands are so close to the mainland that they can be surrounded, that is blockaded by artillery fire from the mainland so no ships could get in) if they continued that, Eisenhower had given authorization to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to use nuclear weapons on the Chinese shore batteries which were heavily dug in, and could not be destroyed by explosives. ^A And if the Chinese had then not ~~dis~~sisted from their efforts, (inaudible) the plan then was for an all-out strike against China. These plans are now available through a study by Morton ^{Halperin} ~~Heppen~~. Probably it was the closest we came to actual nuclear war in this entire era, as far as one can judge; given that we did not, that... the government was not at all certain the Chinese would back down. The Chinese, in that point, according to the Chinese, told many people since then (scholars), they ask ^{D. Krushev} ~~first off~~ for two things: 1) a guarantee that if the U.S. use ^{against them,} nuclear weapons ~~again and~~ the Russians would reply with nuclear weapons (you see, that's a nuclear umbrella, in effect, of the minimal sort, just an umbrella against nuclear attack), ~~and~~ ^{by} our commitment to NATO is that we will use nuclear weapons if they are attacked ^{by} non-nuclear means, but we have a minimal umbrella under that, that if they're attacked with nuclear means, we would reply. The Chinese ^{were} asking just for that lesser assurance. ^{small} ^A and second, they asked for two or three nuclear weapons of their own, so that the United States would know that the Chinese themselves controlled a couple of nuclear weapons, might use them against Taiwan, for example, as a threat. The Russians refused both of those, and this was a tremendous shock to the Chinese, ^{then.} led to great recriminations, and the Chinese backed-down. They stopped the daily artillery blockade, replaced ^{it by an} ~~the fire and~~ every other day artillery blockade; it was a very clever way of backing down in a way, but did allow ships to get in, so there was no more blockade. It was just in the process of recrimination that

- 10 -

came over that, that the Russians proceeded to withdraw all their nuclear technicians the following year from China, which was a major aspect of the ^{Sino-}China/Soviet split, and by 1960 the split was virtually complete, although U.S. didn't realize that yet. So this was this too then was a major factor. Almost surely, the Chinese did not realize (the Chinese by the way had been listening, this was after Sputnik remember) and the Chinese had been listening, like everybody else in the world, to statements by Krushchev against ^{we have a} the ICBM capability, we are producing missiles on a serial-production basis, we are producing them "like sausages," etc., ^{||} He even claimed an ABM capability shortly thereafter. Total bluff. He wasn't producing them at all. The Chinese almost surely didn't know that, which meant to them, I take it, one can quickly infer, they must have thought that this was just a, you know, total betrayal of them. The same, by the way, is true to some extent in Berlin and even in Cuba. Probably, as late as that, given the compartmentation of information in Russia, which is even greater than here, it really is probable that most high-level generals did not know how many ICBM's they had or didn't have. So in the Cuban Missile Crisis, which again was the last straw for the Chinese, they saw it as adventurism to ^{have put} equip the missiles in Cuba but inexcusable to remove them, (and again the Chinese almost surely didn't realize that the Russians had exactly ten operational missiles in 1962. They were building about fifty others.) So all this was...in other words, our successes by these threats were not measured only in the immediate confrontation, but in fact in the tremendous unforeseen effect in splitting these two Communist powers, putting them at ^{Sword's points} (incredible) which, when it was realized, was again realized that here is a benefit ^{for} nuclear superiority beyond our wildest dreams, ^{to some extent,} so on and so on, and with some reality. The trouble was that it depended on a superiority which required Soviet cooperation. The Soviets had to refrain from building any weapons to have that amount of superiority, so Brezhnev refused to cooperate and he produced the weapons. I'm saying that ~~is~~ still in this second period you could

- 11 -

say that the catching up, ^{they're} ~~the~~ building ~~of~~ ^a deterrent, and so forth and I did say that, that is my...it just wasn't worth talking about the Russians as an active participant in this process; they were ^a responsive, dependent aspect of it as far as one could see.

Now, a long preamble, but what I'm saying now: ^I ~~is~~ believe the reality is that we're in a phase now where ^{by} any reasonable and useful standard, the Soviets are full, active participants in the current arms race, ^A and by that I mean, I believe that the risks of nuclear war are increasing significantly, ^t in a way that goes far...is not suggested, is not proportional to, the mere numerical increase in the number of warheads or weapons on both sides, or megatonage or any other quantitative figure like that, such as arms budgets. It's not linear to, say the arms budget or something, to be sure, every weapon that comes in is one more weapon that might be used by accident or unauthorized action, ^{that} ~~that~~ keeps the arms race going, so there is a certain ^(inequality?) (inaudible). But I'm talking about a rather sharp jump up in the risks of nuclear war which is dependent on the characteristics of the kinds of weapons that are being built. And these weapons are being built on both sides and it is precisely, and (in a good deal of competition actually, we're in some degrees ahead, in other degrees they're ahead, and technical superiority is not so significant at this point.) And very significantly, the dangers reflect the fact that both sides are producing these weapons. The dangers would not be so great if only one side were doing it, whether it was the Russians or the U.S., but the fact that both sides are doing it is markedly creating these dangers, and the effect is this: We are ^{entering} ~~echoing~~ now, we are now in, a period that in fact has never existed before in the arms race period of thirty-^{eight} ~~five~~ years. ~~(inaudible)~~. Both sides now have large offensive forces which are significantly vulnerable to the forces of the other side. To put that another way, which is just the mirror image way of saying it, each side has a significant ability, though not a total ability, to disarm the other

- 12 -

^{side}
^ if it strikes first. This has never been true before. The U.S. had such a capability as I say for something like twenty years into the beginnings of the Brezhnev period, until about '65, when the Soviets began to harden their missiles. Then, neither side had such a capability, with both sides having their missiles in hardened ^(silos) ~~missiles~~ and submarines, neither could disarm the other to a significant degree. That was a very stable period and ^{in a} ~~the~~ certain sense the first period was very stable, because the U.S. was so superior that the likelihood was that the U.S. ...because the Soviets would back down in any confrontation, as they did. They did it not because they were cowardly, but because they pretty much had to, ^{they} really didn't have any reply to the threats the U.S. could make to them. That, too, was a kind of stability. This situation is, I hope I don't complicate it too much by saying this, but let me say it anyway, the situation we're in is the situation that people imagined we were in in analyses of the late fifties and early sixties, when they then assumed that both sides had large numbers of vulnerable missiles, there was a lot of analysis of instability of this problem, the reciprocal fear of surprise attack by (inaudible) shelling, worries about pre-emption, worries about instability. That faded away when it was discovered that only one side had large numbers of vulnerable missiles and the other side didn't have any at all.

Q?: This is off the point, but at what point were counterforce capabilities actually discussed? It was my impression that deterrence at that point meant holding cities hostage as opposed to counterforce offering and counterforce offering coming in much more recently with the rise of accuracy, or supposedly accuracy of missile systems

Ellsberg: Okay, yeah, thank you for raising that and please do come in. I want to reply to that one right away, but I want to hear these objections. That notion is absolutely current in ^{elite} ~~the lead~~ discussions of this, professional discussions it's totally wrong. The notion of counterforce thinking or pre-emptive thinking

- 13 -

is something new. In fact, I've been following this very closely. There's not one thought in it which was not currency in writing at the period when I was preoccupied with these things professionally, which was from '58 to '63, ~~and~~ there's a reason for that. ~~That's~~ more true that it was ten years later. The reason is that we thought the situation in 58-59 was what it is now, namely that the other side had large numbers of missiles, some of which we could get if we knew where they were (and it so happened we thought some were invulnerable because we didn't know where they were). The fact is they didn't have anything. But...so we thought of the situation as quite similar to the way it is now, and in that situation, although this did not reach the public at all because in those days--by the way--the secrecy system was almost totally opaque with respect to the public on these matters. Now, there's various ways of checking this from people who have just left the government and reporters and so forth, now it's possible to get an extraordinary amount of knowledge of what the plans are right now--that wasn't true twenty years ago. What you're hearing now is a kind of strategic discussion which is identical to the discussion twenty years ago, except that you didn't hear it twenty years ago.

Q? There was also at that time a tremendous/^{scare} about the Russian antiballistic missile program which...

Ellsberg: That was ten years ago.

Q?: It gives them invulnerability...

Ellsberg: That was ten years later. No, not in '61. You're thinking of basically '69, '70, '71. It was ten years later in fact. But, so, you said. (I just asserted ~~an answer, I didn't give the details~~ in that, Sir.)

Q?: Do you believe they had a counterforce capability.

Ellsberg: Oh, there was no question, you see, because what you're missing here is that ~~counter~~ ^{counter} force capability is now defined as ~~in~~ ^{an} ability to hit hardened ~~sights~~ ^{Sites}, but that just measures it against the hardest, the most difficult targets. There

- 15 -

we didn't know about. Even then, we thought of it only as a partial ability to do it. I can tell you now, for sure, there has never been a year (how shall I put this)--in every actual year (I'll put it positive^{ly}). In every actual year, U.S. doctrine in the ~~Air~~^{air} force and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ratified by the President, has always asserted in secret that in the event of an imminent attack by the Soviet Union or an ongoing attack, the U.S. would make every effort to initiate the blow, to pre-empt that attack, to anticipate it. Never^x has the U.S. ever had a policy privately and secretly that it would wait until enemy warheads ~~arrive~~^{arrived} until it ~~launched~~^{initiated, until it} launched an attack, til an execute order was given. ~~Of~~^{Of} course it was understood, we might not have warning 'til the warhead did arrive, but if you could possibly get those weapons off the ground before the enemy warheads arrive, it was your policy to do so, and you were prepared to do so. Every effort was made to make that possible. ¹And the reason for that was the perceived immense difference between...in the events, in the consequences of waiting for your own weapons to experience attack and getting them off the ground before they were attacked. Now, we're not talking about preventive war, then, which is out-of-the-blue, surprise attack by us, initiating hostilities between the two countries as in the case of the Pearl Harbor attack. That has always been ruled out by the U.S. officially, although it's been proposed by various officials at various times, but it's always been rejected, partly because Presidents have been, by our standards, let's say rational^{le}, to the point of recognizing that the risks even of the best surprise attack, the consequences of the best surprise attack, which are better than a pre-emptive attack, you take the enemy totally by surprise, you'll do somewhat better than if you wait another day. Nevertheless, the risks of doing that are intolerably great compared to almost any alternative, whether even...

MB-G: ^{Is it your assumption, present}
~~By exemptions~~, Dan, the President's Secretary of Defense knows the history and is simply lying about that?

Ellsberg: About what?

Ellsberg, D. (3/1/83)
Boston University, Dept. History

- 16 -

MB-G: About the history of the, you know, no initiation of the...

Ellsberg: We didn't say anything about...you're talking about which Secretary, Weinberger, the current one, he doesn't say anything about the history, I would say.

MB-G: He does, ... always taken it for granted that no first ^{use} ~~(inaudible)~~ is our doctrine.

Ellsberg: You mean no first strike?

MG-B: Right

Ellsberg: Because, of course, he objects openly to no ^{first use.} ~~(inaudible)~~. Let me explain, a good question, what he means by that is what every other President has said, meant that, he is ruling out preventive war, that is a war that initiates hostilities and that is undertaken not in the anticipation of an imminent Soviet attack. ^{And} that is true, we have ruled that out, so far as I know on any occasion, ~~every~~ ^{even} though it has been considered from time to time. But, what no President... ^{he is} ~~is~~ meant to be obscure ^{artist} on this, because that's the only kind of a first-strike that's ruled out, and there are two other significant kinds, two others. One is the one I've described, taken in anticipation of an imminent, of an imminent attack by the other side, and this then is "Use Your Weapons Before You Lose Them." Now, let me point one thing out, the criterion of whether it's worth pressing the button, let's say, when on the one hand you don't expect an enemy attack is that the results have to look better than no nuclear war. ~~That~~ ^{That} may mean losing a local nuclear war, it may mean something pretty bad. Nevertheless, it's hard to make a nuclear war look better than anything else, if those are the alternatives, even if you go first with full surprise, and the U.S. has never managed to do that. It's never looked that good. That's true even in the period of U.S. monopoly--(I could explain that, but it's a footnote so I put it aside for the moment) When you think of a pre-emptive attack, the issue is not nuclear war versus no nuclear war. The issue is nuclear war where we strike first versus nuclear war where we strike second. That's a much less stringent criterion, to ^{have to meet.} ~~me~~, if you're going to press the button. The fact is, and it's not 100% obvious

- 17 -

which way it goes, it could be argued a little bit, but to military men the ability to knock out a sizeable part of the other sides ^{offensive} ~~defensive~~ forces before they arrive or before they ^{launch them} ~~(incredible)~~ looks like a considerably better way to go, situation. Now, that was compellingly true in the period up to the mid-sixties because then the U.S. actually going first couldn't be sure ever, {and that's why I say it didn't look good for preventive war,} couldn't be sure that it would have no retaliation by the Soviet Union, ^{In} ~~and~~ particular, retaliation against Europe was likely to be rather large. Even against Europe, we could hit most of their MRBM's and IRBM's, but we couldn't be sure of getting them all. They had a lot of them, and we couldn't be sure of getting every submarine, so there was always a chance of a few cities being lost, which is big, by normal standards, but it's enough to keep you from a preventive war. But if the choice is between, in fact, a couple of cities and every city you have, every city, that looks like a big difference, even though, as I say, it's not a question then of acceptable...of you know, the loss of a couple of cities being acceptable ^{in some sense.} ~~and so on~~, it's merely that it looks better than the alternative. And you don't have to be certain the other side is going to strike first to feel that it's better not to wait to find out. The difference is so great. And the difference is much less great now, because in fact both sides will retain the capability, probably, to annihilate the other if everything. {a lot of calculations go into this}. Now, the prospect even of pre-emptive strike looks much less good than it used to be, but from my twelve years of working in the Pentagon or near the Pentagon, ask me whether I would expect today high level, serious, conscientious, not ordinarily crazy (in the ordinary sense) generals who believe that there was a serious likelihood that we were about to be under attack and who know ~~how~~ perfectly well how catastrophic it will be if we go first, ask me whether they will still say there are orders of catastrophe and the catastrophe of going first is distinguishably better than

- 18 -

the catastrophe of going second. And I will say there is no question about that--not every general will say that--there are generals who will say let's wait and find out, it really doesn't make any difference, there's no need to rush on this, ~~But~~ the Generals who will say, "Better that we take out most of the Soviet ^{MIRVed} ~~new~~ missiles and whatever submarines we can, than get it all," are going to ~~be~~... look just as authoritative and just as convinced^{ing}, and the President might agree with them.

Q?: Now, is that change, though, psychology, ^{personnel,} ~~for now~~ beaurocratic organization in the last twelve years or so?

Ellsberg: No, I'm saying that this attitude I'm sure will persist, even in a period when there no longer is as nearly as compelling as it was before that, but before that it was taken for granted and had a lot of reality to it.

?: In other words, it's really a residue ^{of a time when it had some} ~~(inaudible)~~ ^{rationale.}

Ellsberg: It's partly a residue and partly...a simple reflection of the way they react to the current ^{realistic} ~~(inaudible)~~ calculations. That, you know, it's a horrible situation--they don't think otherwise--but it's a choice between evils, really, and one looks better than the other. Now, ~~we~~ ~~(inaudible)~~ to somebody who knows that this was our policy throughout that period, ~~of~~ that earlier period, and that this was deeply engrained in our military thinking, (like myself) who looks at the current weapons we're buying, you cannot doubt that among other things these weapons are being designed to fulfill that function; to destroy ^{as} much of the enemy's capability in a pre-emptive strike as possible, even though you don't have any...assurance at all that you'll get all of it, or most of it, but you'll get everything you can. That's also true on the Russian side. There's no way to explain the exact nature of the weapons the Russians are buying now, in contrast to ten years ago where you could explain it, as being devoted simply to an ability to retaliate to a U.S. attack (and thus ^{to} ~~a~~ ^{deterrent} ~~deterrent~~). You either have to assume that the Soviets are blindly imitating what the U.S. is doing

- 19 -

(and that doesn't wash either, because it's really...it's a functional imitation if it is anything, it's not a mirror, physical imitation of what we're doing. With the weapons available to them, they are clearly shaping them in a way to increase their ability for a pre-emptive attack as much as possible, and everything we know about Soviet doctrine, as Pipes keeps pointing out, does emphasize because of their Pearl Harbor, the surprise attack by Hitler, the notion of not being caught by surprise attack dominates them ^(their military planning?) ... (end of tape)

Side 2
that the war starts by NATO or U.S. aggression of some sort, as ~~those are~~ ^{happens,} ~~does ours.~~
But given the war ~~happens,~~ it is essential in nuclear operations to take the initiative. But when Pipes quotes this stuff, again to anybody who knows the doctrine on both sides, it's perfectly obvious that what we're reading is a prescription for pre-emptive attack. It doesn't have any ^{implication} ~~move to function~~ at all in it that they expect to come out well in this, or in fact, other than catastrophically. It's just that this is the way to do it if the war is unavoidable; it's better than waiting. On the one hand, ~~they~~ ^g are...let me point out one other thing that makes this point a little clearer. If you try to limit damage in an actual war by pre-empting, you're going to buy yourself a capability that will work even by pre-empting. You are going to put the other person...the other sides' warheads at risk, that's what this ^{does.} ~~starts.~~
Inevitably, you are giving the other side an incentive to pre-empt itself, in a crisis because you're creating the motive on their side; our weapons are now vulnerable and at risk and we should use them before we lose them. So to acquire this capability is not just a neutral kind of insurance against the bad capability. It's very markedly increasing the probability that you will get struck first in a crisis, if only because the other side fears that you will strike first if they don't. This is not too complicated; it's taking one move ahead or two moves ahead and I assure you, that is done in the Pentagon and on both sides. There was no question on the minds of people who do this and who look at it, that to buy this kind of capability increases the chance

- 20 -

that you will get struck first in a crisis; it lowers ^{your} the deterrence of nuclear attack. ^{and} that simply can't be missed when you look at the actual ^{nature of the} neutral ^{effect?} ^{thing.} Nobody ~~does his~~...sleepwalks to quite this extent. When I see the Soviets then, I repeat, when I see the Soviets increasingly accuracy of their SS-18, which in no way increases its ability to retaliate to an American attack--(and by the way, that doesn't mean a less accurate missile does not only have to hit cities, as ^{is} ~~it~~ often said, by the way; that's a lie, that's an obscure ^{point}.) Most military targets are soft, including significant military targets are soft. Both sides have enormous number of weapons which they can use entirely if they want to on military targets, air bases, communication points, division headquarters, staging areas, logistics, even factories, whatever, tank ^{parks} ~~(inaudible)~~. Their accuracy is enough for that, their yield is enough for that, they do not have to ~~get~~ target only cities. To get that super accuracy which both sides have been getting is only one rationale and that is to stretch for that last extra measure of counterforce against hardened targets, of which there are only some 1,600 or so; there's 1,400 hardened Russian missile silos, we have a thousand hardened missile silos. Each side is hardening in order to get those and you can't miss the fact...making more accurate to get those...and when each side does that, the other side must know that it is being done in order to put their own missiles under risk and that that function can only be realized if the other side strikes first. And that gives you then, in a crisis where you have reason to believe that the other side may choose to do that, that gives you an incentive to strike first and the other side has to know that. And you get this interaction (inaudible)...

Q: ^{What kind of explanation can you offer for that very short-range} (Inaudible question) ^{thinking - rationally choosing suicide?}

Ellsberg: Well, you're not choosing sure suicide, you're raising the risk. One way of rationalization one way which probably...

Q: Raising the ratio (inaudible)...

- 21 -

Ellsberg: Oh, you're right, raising it. I think there are two reasons ^{at} ~~that~~ work, ^{and} ~~and~~ most people in the system--as I say, they all can see the effect, but they're not let in on what the intentions are particularly. Most of them, I think, think--and I've talked ^{with} a lot of ^{Livermore} ~~(inaudible)~~ scientists and I'm sure the Russian counterparts are the same--because the Russian doctrine keeps talking about the need to lower damage in a war, right? Just as ours does, our people think of ourselves as lowering damage if the war occurs. We don't want the war, it will be terrible, but let's lower damage.

MB-G: Dan, ^{let's now take the premise that} ~~(inaudible)~~ there are orders of catastrophe, which is what you...

Ellsberg: You said let's do it or let's not?

MB-G: No, I'm saying that the premise...

Ellsberg: The premise is there are orders ^{of catastrophe.} ~~that are tested.~~

MB-G: Right.

Ellsberg: Yeah, now the truth is that the current level of forces... there is an anachronistic aspect to this thinking; there is an anachronistic aspect, as was suggested, sheer damage level. Because the truth is with forces this size, the orders of catastrophe aren't particularly different. That doesn't mean the military you can...you should bet the military will notice this. There are aspects of inertia and of narrow thinking and so forth, so I can say ^{as} ~~so~~ somebody who lived with the Pentagon during the escalation period, I would predict--and no military man would disagree with me on this--there would be sincere military men who will say ~~xxxxxxx~~: "You may say it doesn't make any difference ^{as} ~~(on the~~ Russian, ^{there are} you may say it doesn't make any difference to hit the Minute Man, because ~~they're~~ still the submarines." That's a very good argument. I would say that. But he would say to me--and I predict this--that I'd rather have the submarines and the submarines and the Minute Man, that's it. And I would say... I hear what you're saying but it really doesn't make that much difference. He would rather find out if it makes a difference or not; ~~it~~ ^{it} might make a difference, it looks as though it might make a difference. How can I be so sure it won't

- 22 -

make any difference. You'd rather get him if you can.

What about the doctrines or ^{warfighting} ~~what fine~~ strategies ^{that} are below full-scale attacks
(inaudible)...

Okay, good, exactly. We're moving along here, because that gets me to my second
motive. You see, I think, by the way, there is such a thing as military thinking
and I could justify this particular military thinking in a certain way actually,
which I won't take the time to do right now. It's not...I don't say it in a
^{purely po} ~~truly ma~~ jorative way. They know certain things that civilians don't know in a
way and ^{they} ~~we~~ don't always articulate them too well, so it sounds sometimes sillier
than it is. But you can predict how they'll think, and let me just predict. They
will think the way I just described, ^{and} that means it can happen on either sides.
The Russians have to worry that we would think that way, and we should worry that
they will think that way, so... Now, we get to the second point. There are
also people who are free of that particular thinking, who can see that to hell
with it, it's just not worth hitting the Minute Man if you're left with 3,000
submarine warheads out there.

But wouldn't you say that ^{yes,} I'd rather be hit by submarines, but still I'd rather
be hit by nothing ^{why not a stable situation?} ~~(inaudible)~~...

Right, and they say all that...okay, right, precisely and that's getting to the
second point, why not a stable situation? Why not get rid of this stuff on
both sides? Exactly so. Okay. Here I think there is an asymmetry, not so
much in what the two sides are doing, there isn't, and not even so much in
what they're trying to do. I suspect they are trying to ^{do} ~~be~~ much the same, but
in their commitment to what we're trying to do. Let me leap ahead one minute
and say I think the Russians are less committed to this approach than our
present leadership is in this country, which means, and I think they would be
much more willing to see the process stop and reverse itself. In fact, I think
they would be willing to do that now. Whereas, I believe Reagan is not willing

- 24 -

accept a stop to the arms race from a President who offers that at a point that will leave us with the monopoly of that weapon or of the ^{Cruise} (inaudible) which has a comparable accuracy, or even the MX which is somewhat less accurate but more than theirs. If we move ahead then for just two...one, two, or three years--
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I can't say exactly what the threshold is, but it's very close--I think then a freeze will not be attainable under a new President even if he were willing to offer one, which Reagan is not, because the Russians won't be willing to accept one, I believe. At least, that's not certain--I have to hope that they will be--I just don't count on that.

Q: Is the freeze technologically ^{verifi} ~~rat~~ifiable once ^{Cruises are out?} (inaudible)...

Ellsberg: That's a complicated question. It may or may not be. There could be a lot of problems with Cruise also, but that's another matter, let me just focus on this. So you've got ~~it~~ ^{to}, as I see it, stop Pershing and MX testing right now, under Reagan. That can only be done through Congress. That would seem impossible if it had never been done before but it has been done once before, so it's not impossible, and in fact we have as big a movement to do it with as the Vietnam ever had, and much bigger than was true in '74, '75. So it would be crazy to say it's impossible to do it, it's just very difficult. It might not be worth spending our effort to do it, as opposed to electing a new President maybe for it, if the situation weren't as urgent as I think it is. So, I'm not saying we should put all our chips on trying to stop it now and ignore '84, '85, but rather we must give a lot of attention to trying to stop it right now, in my opinion, and three events occur, ~~and~~ and I can say it fairly briefly because of the preamble here and so forth--if Pershing ~~is~~ deployed (which might happen by the end of this year.) First, I think the freeze becomes in a full sense fairly...possibly unattainable. Some people think the Russians will be smart enough to accept Pershing, not worry about ^{a Freeze} and get it ~~free~~, I hope so, maybe so, but I don't want to bet on that. Second, they ^{have} ~~had~~ said, the Soviets ^{have} ~~had~~ said that they will respond by comparable means, and they spell

- 25 -

that out to German visitors more than I realized had been spelled out. Specifically, they have under development right now weapons much more accurate than the SS-20, (which by the way is not a comparable weapon to the Pershing, that's just a sheer blind. The Pershing and the SS-20 projects have almost nothing to do with each other, neither of them is an answer to the other, ~~they are unrelated~~ unrelated)

they are unrelated efforts, to a considerable extent. They don't have the same characteristics. But the SS-23 is like the Pershing, and that is just under development right now. The SS-21 and 22 are shorter range weapons that are like the Pershing. The Russians have said to Germans (I have just learned last week): if we put Pershing in Germany, they will bring SS 21 and 22's into East Germany. This doesn't threaten the U.S., but it threatens NATO bases in the same way the Pershing does. Second, they will deploy the SS 23 in Russia. They have said publically that they will go on launch-on-warning, which is an even more reckless move which they might not do except in a crisis. But they might well do it in a crisis. Fourth--they have suggested to some people (they haven't said it in so many words, but Germans have inferred from what they have said) that they might be thinking of putting Trident-like submarines off our coast on steady patrol, the way we do to them, in international waters. If they wanted to, they could put ships with Pershing- and cruise-type weapons off our coast. It is legal. And we could have another Cuban missile crisis and see how it went. Some people have inferred they will put weapons in Cuba. The Germans got the feeling that that was quite unlikely, that that would be

seen as too provocative. But all these other things are bad enough. So that makes the situation much more dangerous. It gets more dangerous if the Pershing goes in, because of this preemption effect I am talking about. (Also you're lowering your time of warning with the Pershings to 4 minutes, right?) Right. By the way, these submarines off our shores would do the same for us. They do have submarines off our shores from time to time, but this would be on routine patrol. And so, it gets more dangerous when we put the Pershing in. It is still more dangerous if the Russians do respond by going to L-O-W, which they have said they would do. Then a computer failure in Russia brings the war about. And it is still more dangerous to both if the Russians do add vulnerable, highly accurate weapons on their side. I am not confident that they won't. I don't trust them not to do that. The SS 18 is a very comparable step. They have shown a willingness to match us in this kind of (what Shelling called) competitive risk-taking. "You are going to make us worry and tread lightly? You're going to make us go to bed wondering whether we are about to be hit? We're going to disturb your sleep a little bit." You can say that's fair, symmetric. But I say it is also participating in steps that make the lives of everybody in the world less secure. That is what I am talking about.

All of these things make the world more dangerous in a crisis. And the third thing is...well, I said, they won't take the Freeze because they will want to develop their own stuff. And while they are developing theirs, we are developing new things which they then have to imitate. (and so forth) I think there is a good

way we could afford to put U.S. troops in those areas confronting sizable opponents was to back them up with nuclear firepower. And that judgment seems quite reasonable, feasible, to me--the requirement seems reasonable to me--in an era when we had a monopoly of nuclear weapons. It came up for question when the Soviets began to acquire sizable numbers of nuclear weapons. But so long as we had an immense superiority, Paul Nitze (quite specifically) argued that superiority would do much the same job as monopoly, in that it would enable you to use tactical nuclear weapons against an ally of the S.U. unilaterally (which was the key requirement) ...In other words, Nitze is.....there have been very few serious policy makers who believe that U.S. interests would be served by a two-sided nuclear war, even a little one. Henry Kissinger is actually one of the few civilians who was able to conceive of that. He went in and out on it, actually. He was an extremist on that point. But really, Nitze never believed that. Most people never believed it. But they did believe that nuclear weapons could not only be threatened credibly, but could be used if necessary if they were used unilaterally. They could be used unilaterally if they were used, not against Russians in Europe, but against Third World countries or countries were opposing (like Korea, Indochina, Middle East, or something) even though those countries were allies of the S.U., like China in 58--if we were sufficiently superior to the Soviets. So the S.U. would back off, even if we had to demolish their allies, if we refrained from provoking them by hitting Russia itself. You could even conceive of hitting Russia itself in a very limited way, if again your superiority were so immense that you could

say to the Russians, "You can reply if you want to commit suicide. But you are not compelled to do that, and we don't think you will."

Now you get to a period, though, when we are not superior. One way to do, then, would be to give up the thought of initiating nuclear war against an ally of the S.U. One way would be to assume....rerun the offshore islands crisis this year, and the Soviets won't back off---they will lend their allies the weapons, they will reply, and what not---forget it. That would be one conclusion. That means giving up Quemoy, which is offshore from mainland China. (There it is. The Chinese nationalists are still there. That is what that success got us.) Well, it wouldn't look too tenable if you didn't have a first use of nuclear weapons. And there are other areas like that. So it would mean pulling in your horns considerably. You could still consider intervening, if you were prepared to surrender those troops when they got surrounded. But no one is prepared to do that, in contemplation. And it really means you can't send the troops there if they are going to get surrounded.

You have got two other choices. One was tried in the 60's. Build up our non-nuclear forces, so when the first set of troops get overwhelmed, or can't do the job, you send another 500,000. That was tried in Vietnam, and it failed. And the domestic consequences meant: you can't do it again.

Another way was: arm regional proxies to the teeth and let them do the job for you. Perhaps even use the nuclear weapons eventually for you, like Iran, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, S. Africa. That was the next effort in an era of parity. When the Shah fell in '79, which was totally unforeseen, that sent a shockwave through the establishment. If the Shah could go, anybody could go.

It answered the question, by the way, whether you could overthrow a dictator with a totally ruthless and efficient Gestapo...like a Hitler. You can. That is what the Shah was, and he was overthrown. Actually, he was overthrown without guns. That doesn't mean the Jews could have overthrown Hitler, because they were in the minority. It does mean the Germans could have overthrown Hitler, if, like Iranians, they were willing to die in quite sizable numbers in demonstrations. (Of course, there are differences, and you would need to look more closely at the differences.) But you can no longer say, after the Shah fell, that it is impossible (even with nonviolent means, if you have enough people) that it is impossible to overthrow such a Gestapo and an army. Anyway, if the Shah could go, anybody could go. Likewise Samosa, who was not expected to go but did go. the same year.

isn't

id

art

t

So the regional proxies looked bad. That meant you were back to post-Korea. We have got to do it with our own troops, but "never again without nuclear weapons." You have got to have a first use threat.

m

How to have a first use threat in a world where you opponents are allies of the S.U., which is just as big as you are? It is a very difficult problem. But I can conceive of a way to solve it. It is a risky way, not a terribly plausible way. But it is the only way I can think of, and I notice that it corresponds to what is being done. And as for the motive, there is no question about the motive. That I do not infer; that is there.

appen?

f

....

There is only one circumstance in which you can make a first strike threat credible in modern terms, current terms. And that is, as a preemptive threat. We are committed to escalate

Not the SS 18, but the "window of vulnerability," which was based on the SS 18. Let me point to you a paradox that is hard to explain, except in the model....

Q: I am still confused.

Have you heard of Minuteman vulnerability? That was vulnerability to the SS 18. They hadn't heard what the ICBM number was....Are you questioning, really, that the public was concerned about Minuteman vulnerability in 1980?

(Let's put it this way: I don't think it was a critical factor in the election.)

I'm not saying the critical factor. I'm saying it was a factor....You think they had never heard of the window of vulnerability? Frankly, you're saying that the money spent by the Committee for the Present Danger and Coalition for Peace through Strength, on TV shows which were seen in every media area in the country, were simply wasted--didn't have any effect on anybody's consciousness. That is not my impression.

(I wouldn't say that at all.)

I'm not saying they were preoccupied by that point. But it was in their minds. "The Russians can get us." Listen, a lot of you have faced audiences ...I'd be surprised if you haven't heard the question, "What about the Russians?" People may not know about the Russian SS 18's. The reason I know that. The reason I say SS 18 is, they say Russian missiles. I happen to know which missile it is. In fact, there is a missile which can do it.

Q: Then what is interesting to me is that despite this enormous propaganda campaign (which hasn't let up since the election, right? Reagan has continued that propaganda campaign...There seem

to be surveys which show that the public is not as hysterical about it as the Reagan administration.

That is right. By the way, remember ...My assumption is that there is, here, an elite, a governmental concern, which is in fact not shared by the public, and which they have to work the public into, in sometimes quite implausible ways--up to buying the weapons the government wants for quite different reasons. Now let me point to you a paradox, which nobody has bothered to say much to Reagan about. He has never been asked a question about this at a press conference. He keeps saying "window of vulnerability." Now, ^{let me tell you something that} it is a little hard to explain, except by my model, the implicit argument I am giving, which is, I would say, not a plausible one on its face. Here is the problem. Reagan is spending what he calls \$1.6 trillion over the next five years (which the Pentagon says will be 50% higher--two and a quarter trillion dollars over 5 years), to a considerable extent (maybe \$400 billion) because of the window of vulnerability. That's why he is spending it...why he can't spend less, as he says at every press conference. Now there is a window of vulnerability in the sense he describes it. It is possible to close that window. There are things that could be done that would greatly reduce that vulnerability. Reagan has not budgetted \$1 to reduce the vulnerability of U.S. offensive forces. On the contrary, virtually everything he is doing is increasing the risk of a Soviet preemptive attack on our country. Everything that he describes as a danger in this country is, by his standards, being increased by his policies. Now, is this just inadvertence? Is he just blind? Is it just what the technology happened to be turning out? Is it because there is no way to decrease the risk?

No, I have to tell you, that's another matter. There's lots he could do. His own supporters... (Nitze and others) have named lots of programs which he has not bothered to buy. Let me give what I think are the two reasons for this. I don't think that it is inadvertance.

Minuteman has three warheads in a vulnerable hole. And Minuteman III actually threatens Russian silos, so there is a reason to hit Minuteman before it is launched. Reagan's first proposal for MX was to put the same missile in the same silo, with 10 warheads, each of which was more capable of threatening Russian missiles than before. A Russian warhead now not only is more under threat while that MX is in its silo. But if the Russians launch first, they get 10 warheads for one warhead that lands there, not three. It is a more tempting target, it is a more pressing target, it is a more dangerous target. And it is not one bit less vulnerable. In fact, the odds that they would pin the thing down further...the fact is that the MX is a larger missile than the Minuteman, so when you put it in a Minuteman silo, which is what he is proposing and what the JCS are still favoring, it fills up that silo, which means that the silo is softer than before. You cannot have as much hardening and as much shock absorbing in it. It is more vulnerable than the Minuteman, which means that a more distant miss will disable that. He is softening a more tempting and pressing target. This is not graduate school analysis when they tell you that. This is kindergarten analysis of this level of systems analysis. You cannot....

Q: Are you saying we should de-MIRV?

Oh, for sure, if you want to stabilize. But that is not what Reagan is after.

Q: And face the Soviet MIRV's?

These are relative matters. Let me talk direction instead of degree. Is the chance of a Soviet preemptive attack greater or smaller or the same if we remove our Minuteman III missiles from operation? We would be leaving ourselves with Minuteman II missiles which have a single warhead, and which are less accurate. The answer is, then, there is less chance of a Soviet preemptive attack, because their missiles are no longer under threat by ours.

Q: Everybody argued that MIRVing was destabilizing. (It is.)

Now you are saying we should de-MIRV...to face their MIRV's... but the other way around...

No, wait. It is not too complicated. Let me just go through it. I think it can be said simply.

When you have single warhead missiles which are not very accurate, on both sides, neither threatens the other. Each threatens soft targets, but not the hard targets.

Q: But you can't have the single warhead weapons bilaterally. The U.S. can de-MIRV, but the Soviets....you can't de-MIRV the Soviets....

Two points. First, of course you can, by agreement (which we are not seeking.)

Q₂: You also might want to point out that normally, you () have confidence that you are going to knock out the silos, if you use.....

Ellsberg:

No. You are raising a point. It's a little technical, but not that much, and let me make the point. The situation is in principle quite stable against pre-emptive attack in this first case, where they both have ^{minute} ~~man~~ two type missiles. I can now get...this side can get the soft targets on this side, which are rather sizeable--airplanes, subs ⁱⁿ ~~import~~, that's quite important. But it can't get the hard ^{end} ~~missiles~~. Let's say then that if the hard ^{end} ~~missiles~~ constitute a large part of your offensive forces, neither side can threaten a large part of the offense ^{side} ~~forces~~ of the other side. One side now puts in highly accurate MIRVs. The situation now is less stable, to use the word, and to be more concrete, it is now more likely that either side will pre-empt. I say either, because ^{this} ~~this~~ side, which doesn't have the accurate MIRVs, now fears that its missiles in a crisis might get hit. It still has some incentive then, though it's at some disadvantage, to hit what it can hit before it loses its missiles. Subs ^{in port} ~~are~~ still a pretty big target, for example.

I thought you were suggesting a unilateral...*de-MIRVing*.

Ellsberg:

I am, I am. Here's what I'm going to say. This side has MIRVs, this doesn't. The situation is now less stable than before, because the chance of pre-emptive attack by either side is now greater than it was before. If this side now adds MIRVs, so they both have ⁽³⁾ ~~it~~, it is now yet more unstable. It's now ultimately unstable, because both sides have a fear that their offensive forces are totally at risk in this process. If you want to stabilize the situation you have two ways of doing it. One is for both sides to deMIRV. *Go back to the original situation.* That's best. [^] Another is for one of them to deMIRV. It's less stable. You have three levels here of risk. One is where one...

MB-G:

You mean more stable.

Ellsberg:

The least stable is when both, next is when one or the other, and most stable is when neither. So I am saying, you know, what you found puzzling... I'm saying in effect that if one side MIRVs, it does not stabilize the situation for the other to MIRV, it further destabilizes the situation for the other

to MIRV.

...put yourself in an ~~inferior~~ ^{inferior position}.

Ellsberg:

Frankly, that would depend on a lot of other asymmetries in the situation, ^{whether you're inferior}...
...~~that you were~~ suggesting before, we go through with this (inaudible).

Ellsberg:

Inferior, with what respect? If you deMIRV, you're less likely...if we de-MIRV we are less likely to be hit by a Soviet pre-emptive attack than we are now. Do we have any disadvantage? Yes. But the disadvantage is that our threat of initiating nuclear war is now significantly less credible than it was before. The disadvantage is not what you have been pointing to, that we are more likely to be hit than before. On the contrary, we are less likely to be hit. The trouble is that we're less able to threaten the Russians of being hit, ^{by initiative} ~~(inaudible)~~ than before. That's the disadvantage. And we buy that advantage of threatening them at the cost of an increased risk of being hit ourselves. Let me say one thing about the Reagan programs. I said they don't spend a dollar in decreasing the "window of vulnerability" on our side. They are entirely 100% directive to opening, enlarging the window of vulnerability on the Russian side, and the effect of both sides being vulnerable does not decrease the chance of nuclear war, it increases the chance of nuclear war. But why then are we doing it? Because we prefer an increased overall chance of nuclear war to sacrificing our threat, of initiating low-level nuclear war in the world. You're worried, but let's come back to that. There's one weak spot in your analysis. That is, it does seem to me that in one respect Reagan is ^{trying to} decrease the window of vulnerability, that is, he wants to deploy more submarines, and the submarines are indeed pretty much invulnerable. They remain as a deterrent ^{to} no matter how many of the land base missiles are knocked out. And so that happens not to be the part of the window of vulnerability that he keeps talking about, but this is the part that he's effectively been doing.

Ellsberg:

My first statement was approximate, ^{are making,} ...because I was about to make the point you made, and so that's fine. You're tracking very closely on this. That's very good. You're correct, but

it's a small here for this reason. What you're referring to now is the Trident Program, which, by the way, he has reduced in scale from the Carter programs, so his contribution to the Trident Program is to reduce it, although he is spending money on it. When Trident comes in, but the reason I didn't say Trident in the first crack at this is--and it is the exception, Trident is not vulnerable, but it comes the latest of any of these developments, the late 80s at the earliest, probably the early 90s. Second, it does fit my generalization which is, in fact, exact, not an approximation. Every penny he's spending is to ~~decrease~~ ^{increase} the vulnerability of Soviet weapons. The Trident D-5 Program, or it used to be called Trident-2, the Trident D-5 is a first-strike weapon for Trident. Now, it is not the case...I'm saying, I have implied, by the way, two things. First, that he has a high priority in increasing the vulnerability of Soviet weapons. That's his main priority: to suggest that in a crisis we may exploit that vulnerability, We may go first rather than go second. I have also suggested, and I'll now make it explicit, that the fact that a large part of our weapons are vulnerable is not a disadvantage from this point of view, it is a requirement. And even to enlarge that vulnerability, to a certain extent, can be optimal. That doesn't mean, however, that all your weapons must or even should be vulnerable. If all our weapons were vulnerable, that's a kind of instability that we really don't want to have to ^{live} ~~work~~ with. That's much more unstable than we want. Indeed, if you're adding vulnerable weapons, you would do well to add some invulnerable ones at the same time to somewhat counterbalance that effect. What I am saying is when you add invulnerable weapons as you add vulnerable ones, that doesn't necessarily, in the eyes of a Russian decision-maker, cancel out the possibility of a Russian pre-emptive attack. In a hot crisis he still may want to get your vulnerable ones, even though he can't get it. But it cools him down. It means that he's got to be more sure that he's about to be attacked before he does, and so forth. So, the Trident is the single case in which you have both... you're adding both invulnerable retaliatory force as well as first strike.

But that's furthest off and his priority is... Now, on the submarines, let me give you an example of what Reagan has done in a program that got very little publicity. Reagan ^{was} ~~said~~ that we were facing this window in the early 80s, right now in fact, and by his standards we are, as a matter of fact. Reagan decommissioned ten Polaris submarines, which have rather inaccurate single warhead missiles, or in some cases three warhead missiles, which amount to several hundred warheads. He decommissioned them all in the first year to save money (saving ~~money~~ in a trillion and a half dollar, five-year program.) These are the most invulnerable warheads we have, and they're absolutely adequate for retaliation. ~~and in~~ in a period that he talks about our having inadequate ability to retaliate, he takes out ten Polaris submarines to save a little money and to convert them into attack submarines, which are for first strike against Soviet capabilities. There was no way to rationalize that action. I mean, if Carter had done it in 1980, Reagan could have said, "You know, he's actually sacrificing our country's security," and talked about it since then.

I would like you to get back to Frank's worry.

Ellsberg: Yeah. Which is?

Which is about unilateral deMIRVing. Right? Because it touches on the general question of unilateral dis....

Ellsberg: Was my argument not clear to you?

.... with other kinds of weapons. I got the feeling that you were ^{saying,} ~~Frank,~~ when you talked about a disadvantage, ~~you~~ ^{you} talked about a disadvantage and when Dan talked about a disadvantage, you said, yes, it's a disadvantage ~~but~~ to people who are thinking of aggressive war, pre-emptive strikes, but not a disadvantage to us who....

Ellsberg: ^{may I use your} language also and then let you respond. ^{Here it is... ok,} ~~You~~ go ahead.

I just saw an inconsistency here, or perceived one. That when you're talking about a current build-up now that would increase Soviet vulnerability, as being unstable, more unstable, but then the opposite as being more stable.

Ellsberg: Yes.

In other words, assume
^..someone...the Americans

deMIRV. The Soviets were superior and had more of a first-strike capability. You're saying that the asymmetry in favor of the Soviets was a stable situation.

Ellsberg: When was this? There was never any asymmetry in favor of the Soviets.

What are you talking about?

your
^.. theoretical part.

MB-G: ~ Theoretically.

you
^ Start with both sides having MIRVs, you're saying that if one side deMIRVs that is more stable than.... *both sides having MIRV's.*

Ellsberg: Yes, I am saying that.

So I'm saying that if one side moves from both having MIRVs ~~through~~ *to* having the ability to deMIRV the other, is that not also more stable?

Ellsberg: deMIRV the other by attack?

Or any other way.

Ellsberg: There's a big difference. Because ...

There's an asymmetry in both situations. One ~~is~~ the scenario that you're painting, asymmetric in terms of the American capability being superior to the Soviet,...

Ellsberg: No, it's symmetric in terms of capability.

But you're perceiving a

Ellsberg: Both sides have quite comparable

(end of Side B)

ELLISBERG, D.

DEPT 2

HISTORY

3/1/83

UNCLASSIFIED

TAPE #5

Harvard
Connecticut

Faculty Seminar:

Boston University

You could even go further. It's hard to imagine either side either using them or credibly threatening to use strategic weapons unless nuclear weapons have already exploded somewhere, little ones. Think of that as ~~pretty~~ pretty stable. Some people would say, "wellyou see what we're getting, we're getting ^{once} ~~deterrence~~. No big war." Everybody would tread softly. There's only this problem. Neither the weapons we bought in the past, nor the weapons we buy in the future, on either side, in my opinion, have abolished war. Nor have they abolished wars in which a super power is a significant participant, at least as a supplier and potentially as an intervener. That's what I see, and I don't see that changing. So we don't have what Herman Kahn ^{called} ~~what~~ a war-free environment when you look at the stability of our system. Second, at least one side, the U.S., is still determined to maintain the option and use ^{nuclear weapons} if necessary, the use of little nuclear weapons. I believe that Reagan, and Carter before him, after the Shah fell, accepted a real probability, ^a possibility, that the U.S. may have to ^{use} ~~lose~~ some nuclear weapons in some cases, and they are trying to make that as safe as possible. That's why they are spending the money. The money ^{they are} spending may make it safer than would otherwise be, but the system we've got is not one that is terribly reassuring in an environment in which some nuclear weapons are going off. The fact is that the nature of the system that both sides are buying is: you may ^{think} you are minimizing the chance of war, but not to zero. You're minimizing the chance of nuclear weapons in war, at least the Russians are, but not to zero. The U.S. may use them. And if there is a war, the chance that the U.S. will use ~~these~~ nuclear weapons is quite sizeable and is increasing by our own efforts. If some small nuclear weapons are used by the U.S., the chance they will be replied to is much greater than it ^{would} be. If there is a small nuclear exchange at that level, the chance that that will explode and destroy the northern hemisphere in terms of industrial ~~&~~ civilization, cities and most of the people, is much greater than ^{would} otherwise be, thanks to the programs of the last ten years and the current year on both sides. Both sides are

wiring up the northern hemisphere as hostages to the actions of the other side, in such a way ^{as} is to increase the likelihood that if there is a war, the northern hemisphere goes. I think this must be resisted and it means ? that we do not have the full collaboration of the Soviet Union leaders in resisting this. They too are making judgments that are contributing to this problem, but we can hope that they feel less committed to this strategy of threatening first-use, on which this all rests, than we are. I'll give one reason why that is. Their empire is more compact and is pretty much limited because of their history of number twoness since the Second World War. Pretty much limited to an area where they have non-nuclear superiority, enormous non-superiority. Therefore, to hold on to what they have in East Europe and now in Afghanistan does not compel them to threaten to initiate nuclear war. They can repel any challenge for that with non-nuclear means. Our empire is so far ~~away~~ flung, we hang on to it with a little lighter touch than the Soviets from day to day, through proxies, through threats, rather than by immediate military presence. By it's enormously larger than our leaders feel they can only hang on to what we have, by threatening to initiate a nuclear war, and we can only make that plausible with the kind of spending we are doing. Therefore Reagan is not willing to see an end to the arms race, or measures to increase the stability. He is instead determined to maintain a two-sided arms race. He would like a one-sided one if he could get one, but he knows he can't get that. He prefers a two-sided arms race to no arms race, and he prefers a two-sided arms race which is increasingly unstable to one which is increasingly stable. The Russians I don't think are committed to that because of the nature of their empire, being different, and not because they are not an imperial country. Therefore I think they think that their chances of surviving and holding on to what they have would be better in ~~the~~ ^a world with fewer nuclear weapons and without the first-strike weapons that both sides are acquiring. Regrettably, they seem to feel that as long as we go on acquiring first-strike weapons, they'll do it too rather than suffer the

asymmetry you were suggesting. They have decided they don't want to be the ones to get rid of their ^{MIRV'S.} ~~missiles~~. Why not? They'd be better off if they did. But they said: "no, we see some ^{us both} advantages in ^{us both} having them. ~~both~~ We don't want to be subject to that asymmetric trip." So they don't seem to be willing to do it. But bi-laterally it is possible, and that's what we must achieve.

formal part.

There are three very immediate pieces of legislative proposals. One is that - one problem is that the things I'm talking about look unilateral, and whatever you say about the American public now; unfortunately, ^{although} they are not where Reagan is, ~~but~~ they have been indoctrinated to a point that they seem fairly resistant to anything that can be described as ^{a unilateral measure}. I don't think we should take that as an absolute wall, but it is a problem. The lobbyists are very worried about it. I think we have to overcome the inhibitions of the lobbyists. They regard that as so difficult. I think it's difficult, but necessary. So you have to think of a way to get somewhat a unilateral measure done without it looking too unilateral, so being described as unilateral. One way is to try to bypass the President and get a bi-lateral agreement by a

agreement with the Russians. ^{It} has proposed that Congress pass the following bill and the freeze is supporting this. That after a certain date, three months, or six months away, the U.S. will no longer test warheads, unless and until the President certifies that the Soviets had tested warheads after that ~~NA~~ date. This permits the Russians then to join us in a tacit, two-sided test ban. That seems pretty doable. ^{At} Present certification, as you see in El Salvador, is a problem. However, we're talking about something that can be checked by all over the world and the U.S. So it isn't too easy

for him to assert that the Russians have been testing if the Japanese and everybody say *otherwise*. These are just warheads. ^{The} Trouble is that flight testing is more important, ^{and} that doesn't cover flight testing. Now the same approach could be used for flight testing. Just say we won't test any missiles. I would like to see that. After a certain date if the Russians won't. That's better. A third one is to say, which I like, that unless ^{total} and until our President will propose a bi-lateral ~~XXX~~ verifiable freeze, we Congressmen will not give him any more money for nuclear weapons. The implication of that is - the logic of that is, if the Soviets had been offered a freeze and ~~X~~ had rejected it, we would go along with spending the money. Actually they would. We, in this room, would not keep Congress from spending money to match the Soviets if the Soviets had rejected a freeze. That reality... I do not foresee a freeze movement with the power to end the arms race unilaterally here if the Soviets continue. The best we can hope for is to give the Soviets an opportunity to stop, and hope that they would accept it. I don't believe they would accept it now. They said so, but they have never been tested. I would like to see them tested and I believe they would. I wouldn't want to say (I'm sorry to say from what I've heard) that I would bet my life that they would, but I don't want to go on betting all of lives that they won't, ^{which} ~~what~~ is what the President is doing. What you can say is as long as the President is in this position of refusing to carry out the will of 70% of the American public, which is that the Russians be offered this proposal, then we must bring the ⁺upmost pressure to bear on him, and that is by cutting out the funding ~~and~~ ^{Moreover} I would like to see the logic understood - the truth is that most people haven't heard this logic, so they haven't rejected it, they just haven't heard it. I would like them to see ~~that the logic is understood~~ them understand the logic. We're cutting off the funding because if you spend this money now, a freeze may become unattainable. Very simple logic. Everybody who hears it, I think -

everybody who hears that finds that quite plausible when they hear it, but I find that they find it unfamiliar. I was asking some freeze people including Jim Wallace, who can said to have invented the freeze, he said: "Boy, that's sounds awfully plausible." And I said: "You're reaction is the same as everybody's. Why do you think this ~~XXX~~ isn't commonplace? Why is it that you haven't heard this before?" And he gave me a very interesting answer. He said: "Most people in the country think the Russians are ahead of us. Freeze people don't believe that, they believe the Russians are even with us. Your argument is based on the ~~pre~~ception that we are ahead of the Russians, technically, which almost nobody sees. ^{The} ~~XX~~ freeze people have been so concentrated on the fact that we are overall equal, which is true, that they've missed the significance of the fact that we are ahead of them technically," That's the basis of my ~~X~~ argument here. If we were equal technically, we could stop two years from now and we would be at the same level. But the trouble is that because we are ahead, if we stop two years from now, we'd be irreversibly ahead of them and I don't think the Russians will accept that. I would to see that argument get wider

That's the same argument about the initiation of ~~merve~~ ^{MIRV's}.

Precisely.

I'm confused about something. A couple of years ago we weren't hearing that
lot of stuff about Now we never hear
we
anything about what we're doing, ~~XXX~~ only hear the Russians they're going
to have to do

Here's what has seemed to have happened. First of all, launch-on-warning does look terrible. It's terribly reckless. On the other hand, if you were desperate you should bet that ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ either side might do it. Our own willingness

to discuss it should tell us not to dismiss Russian \$ statements that they are willing to do it. It seems that we most heard that talk on launch-on-warning - it appeared when Carter was trying to head off the necessity - before he made a decision on the MX program. The hawks were actually, of all things - a lot of discussions of Committee for Present Danger people - they were all saying: this is unconscionable. Carter is proposing this in order not to spend what he should do, which is the MX and a lot of other things. Well, then Carter went for the MX and stopped talking about launch-on-warning. The truth is the MX is vulnerable, but they haven't yet admitted that. The administration hasn't admitted that. They ~~XXX~~ talk about dense-pack, obviously dense-pack (is unworkable/vulnerable). Reagan hasn't admitted that. If he were prepared to admit that, we might hear him talk about launch-on-warning.

Dense-pack against.

No, obviously Reagan's desire is dense-pack with an ABM. He seems to be shying away - my prediction to Margaret and others was that we would be hearing ABM right away to defend dense-pack. That hasn't happened, and I can only infer that ~~XXXXX~~ they are sounding the testing of the waters. There's no question they want ABM. They're not talking about it. Apparently they regard the public as so resistant to ABM.

Don't you think they're willing to give up dense-pack in favor

What they're going to come up ^{with} is a smaller missile - by the way when I said there were a lot of things ~~XXXXX~~ to reduce vulnerability if you wanted. A smaller missile would be one way to do it. Perfectly feasible. Give yourself a smaller missile, you can reduce vulnerability in lots of ways. What makes MX impossible to make invulnerable is it so big. There's no way to make it invulnerable. But

a small ~~XXXXXX~~ missile you can hide, you can make it mobile, you can put it on various platforms.

Much more destabilizing.

No, the small missile? No, I'm saying the larger.

Hide them.

They are not in a desirable target. The other side is less likely to strike you because you have less

*Low cost
production*

By the way, let me prepare for what I guess will - what this new committee is going to come out with and what the answer to it is. They are going to say, probably, that what we need is a small missile that can be made invulnerable with a single warhead. They'll use the same arguments I've been using to say that this is in favor of stability. In a certain sense, it is in favor of stability, but its real advantage from their point of view is that it keeps the production lines going. It's a ~~XX~~ new missile you can build. It isn't ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ a destabilizing missile, but it's a new missile. So at least it keeps the arms race even if you can't be stabilized, it isn't a good . What they are not admitting is that if you want to go towards stability there is a lot cheaper way of doing that and that is not to go ^{to} new missiles, but to get rid of your old destabilizing missiles, either unilaterally or preferably bi-laterally. By the way, *Steve MIRVED* has already talked about getting rid of ~~new~~ ^{MIRVED} missiles. Possibly he hasn't talked about getting rid of them totally, but diminishing them. The real way - if they are ready to ~~XX~~ take stability seriously under public pressure, then the way to do that is - bi-lateral agreements that get rid of the accurate first, ~~new~~ ^{Steve MIRVED} missiles on both sides. Get rid of SS18, 19, 17, get rid of Minuteman III, and in fact viola, the situation is really

less dangerous than *before* . Not without danger, but actually I would ratify that as being a markedly less dangerous situation that we have this year. For us, you see, adding new missiles still ~~leave~~^{leaves} the other side with that disarming capability against - not the new ones, but the old ones. ? We don't change the situation radically, ~~the~~^{the} only way to change it ~~XXXXXXX~~ radically is ~~X~~ to get rid of the first-strike counter-force weapons on both sides, not to add new weapons to them. So you don't want D-5 and you don't want any of these new missiles.

doesn't have any of these.

I'd be interested, by the way, I haven't usually asked this because I don't get a chance, but ^{up} as we break off, if people will inform me of parts that they found either unnecessary or wrong, or whatever, or on the other hand, new and useful, it will help me in further discussion of this.

I think you really answered the question why Reagan

? and why

I think you talk

and Carter too. Intervention is basically

Interventions policy? If you take away the first-use, you are going to make some kind of interventions look much less feasible right away, in some cases. Not in El Salvador.

But how can Congress take away

Congress has had, various times, bills with as many as 150 or so Congressmen saying: no first-use. They never followed it up to find a majority, because they - they didn't see it as important as I do think it is.

Russians have really

No, only last year. They have proposed bi-lateral no-first-use. They finally took a unilateral no-first-use step last year. The Chinese are the only ones ^{had} unilaterally who said no first-use. Now the Chinese and Russians have said it, not the British, French, Israiles, or Americans.

Might want to tie that whole analysis

All of this is to protect the rapid ¹deployment force by posing that they could use the nuclear warheads that they will have with them. ^{The} Rapid deployment force will have nuclear warheads with them. With the MX - the MX is to make the world safe ^{for the} through rapid deployment force to use its nuclear weapons if necessary. That's what the MX is for. By the way, if you say what is the Russian SS-18 for, I think it's to nail down in the future the assurance that we won't intervene in their empire if they have to get very rough in it. ~~XXX~~ In Poland.

Let's ask about the zero option. On the surface it sounds very nice. Nobody wants SS20s or Pershing, but it is a difficult thing responses to because they don't want to end up at a negotiating level missiles on both sides. What's a vital political response to zero option.

s

Well, the first point is that there's almost noone in the world with any political strength, ^{who} believe that the Soviets will accept that proposal, starting with Reagan. So, it's ~~XX~~ very obviously ~~to be a~~ proposal meant ^{to} to be rejected. I personally, by the way, don't - have never wanted to take the position, the Russians had to reject that, were justified in rejecting that, or were right in rejecting it because they ^{are} aren't. They are just acting the way we would in their position, and that doesn't mean it's right. The fact is that ^{if} they could

~~XXXXXXXX~~ by getting rid of the SS20, keep the Pershing out of Europe, they in my opinion should do that, precisely, even if they had to give up all their SS20s. They are not willing to do ^{it} and that's predictable. So now the next point is - actually what - here's what I would like to see Andropov do right now. I would like to see right now Andropov propose to a package deal. The bi-lateral freeze and a unilateral reduction of SS20s down to 50 to 100 SS20s. Offered 162. Go down to a hundred or less, SS20s saying: "You claim, Reagan, that the obstacle to the freeze is the imbalance in Europe. I don't admit that there is an imbalance, but I don't ^{want} ~~want~~ there to be an obstacle to a freeze, so I will get rid of the SS20s down to a level that the European allies have agreed is acceptable to them." Which they have already admitted. They have already indicated. About 50 or so.

What's your feeling *[about the before-the-second proposal]*

The background of Bush's trip indicate that they all regarded something like the ^{while} proposal as an acceptable compromise ~~which~~ Reagan didn't find it an acceptable compromise. The Russians also rejected ~~XX~~ it for reasons that are not clear, entirely. They may not

Do we know that they really rejected it or the

I don't know. Every backgrounder says, and the Russians haven't denied that they rejected it. But it's not clear why. The point ^{is} it wasn't part of the freeze. It's not ^{so} I think if the Russians propose this, they would end the arms race. Reagan wouldn't like it. Reagan would want to reject it. I think it's an offer he can't refuse under pressure. The allies would want it, the public would want it. Congress would want it and I don't see how he would rationalize ~~and~~ what he could say, by the way, is - as a

compensation - is look, I got a ~~XX~~ reduction on SS20s. I got a better deal out of this than the freeze even asked for. I got a deal satisfying the allies, that's my ^{basic} ~~base~~ requirement (which is a lie, but ~~XXX~~ that's what he said,) "I've met my requirement, we've satisfied the allies, and I got a better deal by . He might get a Nobel Prize and he might be re-elected. But if he gave us the freeze, I'm willing to see even that.

He wouldn't get a Nobel Prize, but he might get an Academy Award.

He would prefer that, of course. It was a wrong route to getting an Academy Award.

Something has been bothering you.

I'm very anxious to find out what your explanation is for Reagan policy is. This may be obvious, but are you saying that the Reagan Administration's whole new policy vulnerability is directed at a crisis management? That is to say, "look we're so vulnerable that you wouldn't dare mess with us and therefore we can have our way with you."

That's a slight simplification of it. I'm saying - it's a combination of things here. You're so vulnerable, and we are to a degree also vulnerable, that if you reply to our use of nuclear weapons in a desperate situation, you're risking all-out nuclear war. What it says, in so many words, is we'll put troops in the Middle East, and if the Soviets challenge them they are risking World War III. I think what's I've said is that I think there is a strategy behind that statement, and I have spent the last couple of hours unpacking the implications of that statement. Why would World War III be a risk if Marines in Iran were challenged by the Soviet Union? Actually, it would be a risk. It's not wrong. Why would it be? The answer is it's more risk this year than it would have been ten years ago.

and it will be more risk three years from now, and that's Reagan wants.

Weinberger wants that risk.

He wants that risk, and I'll be very specific on it. The way ^{deterrence} ~~deterrence~~ has worked in fact, in the various asymmetric situations I've described, the various phases of it till now, ^{that} ~~has~~ been ~~that~~ each side has been quite cautious in fact. I'm including Soviet ^{deterrence} ~~deterrence~~ of various kinds. Each side in fact has been very ~~cautious~~ cautious about matching the other super power's intervention in any given area. If one side gets there first, the other side stays out. Both sides have been quite cautious in a number of situations. Why, for instance, have we not even come close to thinking of putting troops into Hungary or ~~EMEX~~ Czechoslovakia? Not because we had no right to. I believe, for instance, that the Soviets have a right by most standards to be supplying ^{gorillas} ~~gorillas~~ in El Salvador to whatever extent they are.

have a monopoly

The point was that - these situations are stabilizing up to some level and then de-stabilizing above that level. Incidentally, if you think in engineering or physics terms, ^{about} the use of the word stability. A system isn't just stable or unstable, it's stable or unstable to shocks or displacements of a certain kind. Take a - Hungary is a case where the Soviet ^{deterrence} ~~deterrence~~ has always consisted in large part of an enormous non-nuclear superiority in their own sphere. Take Iran. Iran has been up till now part of our sphere. That has not reflected a non-nuclear superiority on our part. The ^{Russians} ~~Russians~~ are next door to that. They can overmatch anything we put into Iran twenty to one. But nevertheless, we have maintained pretty good control over that area because, in large part, of our nuclear superiority in the past, and it's not as good as it was before. The ^{when} ~~Russians~~ ^{when} on the other hand, ~~has~~ retained very good control of Hungary, even ~~though~~ ^{though} they had no nuclear weapons. I mention by the way, they always had a lot of

deterrence. ^{deterrence} Their ~~deterrents~~ in the early days have been an attack on us, whether nuclear or non-nuclear. Even with an atomic attack in those days, we calculated we couldn't stop them of over running Europe if we pressed the button. Our best estimate - calculation by the Joint Chiefs as late as the 49 and 50 - was that if we dropped our entire stockpile of nuclear weapons, which were only atomic weapons then and which numbered only some 2 to 3 hundred weapons then, not too small, a lot ~~X~~ more than the Russians had for a long time, the Russians would ^{hell} take all of Europe and the Middle East. We couldn't stop them. We could hit their cities. They would have had Europe, we would have destroyed their cities, and they would have Europe. That was a very big deterrent. If you ask why we didn't use - we were always congratulating ourselves. We had a monopoly and we didn't use it. The fact is that there was study after study that looked at what would happen if we would use it, and we were deterred by the results of those studies. Same thing in Hungary. If we'd thought of going into Hungary, we weren't so much deterred by ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ nuclear forces; we knew we would get our ass whipped if we went into Hungary. If we went in with Nuclear weapons by 1956, there would be a two-sided nuclear war. The U.S. wouldn't be hit, but Europe would be destroyed. Deterrence has worked on both sides, and it does not work just to keep each side from preventive war by the other. It has worked on both sides to stabilize each side's control of its own empire. Russians nuclear weapons have kept us out of Eastern Europe even when the temptation or the challenge to go into ^{Central} Western Europe was pretty strong. We had to swallow - frankly, when I was in the Marines in 1956 - that was Hungary - I felt terrible that I wasn't able to help Freedom Fighters in Hungary, which doesn't mean I thought ^{we} should intervene. But the reason wasn't that it was wrong to intervene, the reason was the risks were too great. I felt terrible about that. Just ordinarily patriotic. I don't feel ashamed of that ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in retrospect. It was terrible. If Russians had gone into Poland, what would we feel? Wouldn't we feel terrible? But we wouldn't want NATO to do anything about it because we don't want to blow the world up, and it would mean blowing

the world up. That's Russians deterrence and it means that the Russians have been able to hold onto their empire. Likewise I don't want the Russians to intervene in Iran, not because they shouldn't, but I don't the world to blow up.

Let me
^ Ask you a question on another topic. I've read a lot of your early stuff.

good analysis.

Described the current situation, more so than

Well, it wasn't useful at the time because it was based on false premises, nature of the situation. But it the whole situation works. Iran is not a pleasing fact

The usefulness

Use to be put in the context. by the Pentagon. Analysis.

Student of philosophy.